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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 NSC-05 CPR-01 CIAE-00
DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 /053 W
----------097759 031915Z /43
P 031625Z SEP 77
FM USINT HAVANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 032

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EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR CU
SUBJ: OPENING OF US INTERESTS SECTION

REF: HAVANA 0012

1. RECEPTION, SEPTEMBER 1, MARKING OPENING OF USINT ATTENDED BY UPWARDS OF THREE HUNDRED CUBAN OFFICIALS, MEMBERS OF DIPLOMATIC CORPS, PRESS, AND CULTURAL LUMINARIES INCLUDING ALICIA ALONSO. RANKING OFFICIALS IN ATTENDENCE WERE MINITER OF FOREIGN TRADE MARCELO FERNANDEZ FONT AND ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER PELEGRIN TORRAS. (TORRAS SPEECH REPORTED IN SEPTEL). IN ADDITION, SOME TEN VICE-MINISTERS (SEE REFTEL) ALSO PRESENT. VALDEZ VIVO, CHIEF OF INTERNATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF COMM-UNIST PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE, DID NOT ATTEND AS EARLIER INDICATED. BUT COUNCIL OF STATE FOREIGN POLICY ADVISOR ALFREDO RAMIREZ OTERO WAS PRESENT. (FIDEL CASTRO IS CHIEF OF COUNCIL OF STATE). RAMIREZ' ATTENDANCE BOTH AT RECEPTION AND AT AIRPORT WELCOMING CEREMONY FOR USINT CHIEF, AUGUST 30, IS VIEWED AS SIGNIFICANT BY INFORMED OBSERVERS.

2. ATMOSPHERE BOTH AT AIRPORT AND OPENING RECEPTION WAS EXTREMELY CORDIAL, WITH ALL CUBAN, OFFICIAL, PARTICULARLY THOSE IN ECONOMIC FIELD, VOLUNTEERING WILLINGNESS TO HAVE FURTHER CONTACTS.

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3. LOCAL MEDIA HAVE REPORTED OPENING FACTUALLY IN LOW KEY WITH NOT PHOTO COVERAGE.PHOTOS TAKEN BY GRANMA AND JUVENTUD REBELDE WERE NOT PUBLISHED.) REMARKS BY USINT CHIEF, SWISS AMBASS-ADOR, AND ACTING MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS HAVE NOT BEEN REPORTED. U.S. PRESS INTEREST AND COVERAGE WAS, OF COURSE, EXTENSIVE THROUGHOUT THE WEEK.

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4. REACTION OF LOCAL POPULACE TO OPENING, AS MANIFESTED IN LIMITED CONVERSATIONS THUS FAR WITH USINT OFFICERS, APPEARS FAVORABLE, BUT NOT EXUBERANT. MORE THAN 75 INDIVIDUALS, INCLUDING SOME BINATIONALS, DESIRING TO JOIN RELATIVES IN U.S. APPEARED AT CHANCERY SEPTEMBER2, BUT OTHER THAN THIS, THERE HAVE BEEN NO DISPLAYS OF EXTRAORDINARY CURIOSITY, OR ENTHUSIASM OR OTHER RESPONSE ON PART OF LOCAL RESIDENTS. LOW-KEY PRESS PLAY, CUBAN PREFERENCE FOR INSIDE CEREMONIES AT OPENING, AND REMOVAL OF PUBLIC FOR AIRPORT VIEWING AREA UPON ARRIVAL OF USINT CHIEF MAY, HOWEVER, BE EVIDENCE OF REGIME'S DESIRE TO MINIMIZE POPULAR REACTION.

5. IMPORTANCE OF ECONOMIC MOTIVATION FOR NEW CUBAN POLICY TOWARD US HIGHLIGHTED BY RECEPTION ATTENDANCE OF FERNANDEZ FONT. FIDEL CASTRO, SPEAKING HOLGUIN, SEPTEMBER 1, DID NOT MENTION USINT OPENING, BUT POINTED OUT THAT BECAUSE OF ECONOMIC CONDITIONS (LOW FREE MARKET SUGAR PRICES) CUBAN GOVERNMENT COULD NOT PROVIDE SUFFICIENT UNIFORMS AND SCHOOLBOOKS FOR CHILDREN THIS YEAR. DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL THAT CASTRO, IN HIS JULY 26 SPEECH AT CAMAGUEY, ALSO POINTED OUT THAT DRAFTS OF MANUAL LABOR WERE AGAIN REQUIRED THIS YEAR TO CLEAN SUGAR FIELDS BECAUSE OF LACK OF HARD CURRENCY TO BUY HERBICIDES. RAUL AMADO BLANCO, ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT OF CUBAN NATIONAL BANK, IN RESPONSE TO USINT OFFICER'S QUESTION,AUGUST 30, DECLINED TO AFFIRM THAT CUBAN HARD CURRENCY BALANCE OF PAYMENTS WOULD IMPROVE THIS YEAR.

6. SOVIET CHARGE MANASOV AND EAST EUROPEAN AMBASSADORS (AS WELL AS
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CHINESE) ATTENDED SEPTEMBER 1 RECEPTION. MANASOV TOLD USINT OFFICER THAT USSR WELCOMES BUCAN-US RAPPROCHEMENT WHICH MAY ALLOW CUBANS TO GAIN NEEDED ECONOMIC BENEFITS. JUDGING FROM COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS, SOVIETS HAVE NOT BEEN COMPLETELY BRIEFED BY CUBANS ON US PLANS AND PRESENCE IN HAVANA.

7. SUMMING UP FIRST WEEK IN HAVANA, WE BELIEVE THAT WE HAVE RECEIVED A POSITIVE, BUT RESTRAINED, RECEPTION. CONSIDERING TWO DECADES OF ANIMOSITY, WE VIEW THIS BEGINNING AS BEST THAT COULD BE EXPECTED.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
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Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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From: HAVANA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
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Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1392293
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: OPENING OF US INTERESTS SECTION
TAGS: PFOR, PDIP, CU, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
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Review Markings:
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